

AVP/USA BY-LAWS

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Amended: September 4, 1995
Amended: February 17, 1997
Amended: September 8, 1998
Amended: September 5, 1999
Amended: May 30, 2004
Amended: May 30, 2010

ARTICLE 1

Name, Scope, Function & Structure of Organization

These By-Laws shall govern the national organization for the Alternatives to Violence Project under the name of "Alternatives to Violence Project/USA, Inc." (AVP/USA). The organization shall be structured into three levels: local groups, regional organizations and the national body.

All groups that use the name "Alternatives to Violence Project" or "AVP" shall adhere to the following mission statement:

The mission of the Alternatives to Violence Project is to empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation and trust.

Founded in and developed from the real life experiences of men and women in prison and others, and building on a spiritual base, AVP encourages every person's innate power to positively transform themselves and the world.

AVP/USA is an association of community groups and prison based groups offering experiential workshops in personal growth and creative conflict management for adults and youth. The national organization provides support for the work of these local groups.

The Local Groups shall consist of organizations that conduct programs that adhere to the principles of the Alternatives to Violence Project as contained in these by-laws and the policy statement. The Regional Organizations shall consist of organizations set up by the local groups in geographical areas convenient for networking among local groups. The national level shall consist of all the United States and its territories.

Each Local Group shall operate in an area in which it believes itself competent to cover effectively. The regional organization of which it is a member shall work with local groups to determine the boundaries of local groups within its area.

Local Groups are encouraged to form regional organizations for mutual support. The boundaries of those regional organizations shall be determined by the local groups and the Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLARG).

Local Groups have the right and responsibility to participate in CLARG by appointing a local group representative or by representation through regional organizations. CLARG is committed to empowering and nurturing existing and emerging local AVP groups. It is also responsible for compiling and reporting activity data to be used in the AVP/USA Annual Report.

Local Groups and regional organizations may or may not be incorporated as they see fit. They must all, however, operate within the mission statement, guidelines and policies developed by AVP/USA, and follow the manuals authorized by AVP/USA.

1. Regional organizations and local groups who are not members of regional organizations shall report annually on their workshops and other activities to CLARG.

All Local Groups and regional organizations taking 501(c)(3) status from AVP/USA shall submit a financial statement to the Finance Committee of AVP/USA annually by a date to be specified by the Finance Committee.

2. AVP/USA, its regions and locals are all-inclusive organizations. AVP/USA and its regional and local bodies shall not discriminate in any of their policies, appointments or other activities on account of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, religious conviction, or criminal history. This list is meant to suggest intent, not be exhaustive.
3. AVP does not engage in political action or lobbying and does not promote any specific political view as an organization. Members may not espouse a political position in the name of AVP or when in their role as AVP facilitators.
4. AVP does not promote any religious doctrine.
5. The programs of AVP/USA are educational in nature, and are not psychotherapy.
6. Each local group and regional organization shall be financially self-sustaining.

ARTICLE II

Incorporation – Tax Exemption

AVP/USA is incorporated under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax exempt organization. The state of incorporation shall be determined by its Board of Trustees. Its Articles of Incorporation shall contain all provisions required by law to preserve its status as a not-for-profit tax exempt organization. A group tax exemption shall be sought for each of its subordinate groups that applies to AVP/USA for inclusion in the group tax exemption, and that meets the requirements for obtaining and retaining such a Federal Income Tax Exemption.

ARTICLE III
Board of Trustees

1. A Board of Trustees shall be comprised of the Committee of Committees (CofC) and the officers of the Corporation.
2. AVP/USA shall be governed by policies and decisions agreed upon by the Annual National Gathering. The Board of Trustees is responsible to the Annual National Gathering and the authorities of the state of incorporation for the management of the property and affairs of the Corporation. The Board shall delegate all tasks to appropriate committees, except those specifically required to fulfil its fiduciary responsibilities.
3. The Board of Trustees shall meet at least once a year at the Annual National Gathering and at other times as needed. A record of decisions made at the Annual Gathering is to be approved by the Board of Trustees and posted on the AVP/USA website within 60 days after each meeting.
4. Quorum: At any meeting of the Board of Trustees, one half of the total membership of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IV
Annual National Gathering

1. There shall be an Annual National Gathering of AVP/USA each year, at a time and date set by the Board of Trustees.
2. The Annual National Gathering is the ultimate policy making body of the Corporation.
3. The Treasurer shall present to the Annual National Gathering a report, verified by the Finance Committee, showing:
 - a) the assets and liabilities of the Corporation at the end of the preceding fiscal year;
 - b) the principal changes in such assets and liabilities during said fiscal year;
 - c) receipts of the Corporation (designating those restricted to particular purposes) during said fiscal year; and
 - d) disbursements during said fiscal year.

Such report shall be permanently filed with the records of the Corporation and posted to the website within sixty (60) days of the Annual Gathering.

4. The Finance Committee shall submit to the Annual National Gathering a proposed budget.

5. Ratification of Important Matters of Policy: Issues determined by any committee, in consultation with the Committee of Committees, to involve important matters of policy shall be submitted for ratification to the Annual National Gathering.

ARTICLE V Officers

1. The officers of the Corporation shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall take office at the end of the Annual National Gathering which approved them. Vacancies may be filled by the respective committees naming these officers and for a term to expire at the end of the next Annual National Gathering.
2. The President: The President shall be nominated by the CofC with input from CLARG. The President shall be appointed by the Annual National Gathering and serve a one year term and can be reappointed for two successive terms. The President shall have the authority to sign on behalf of the Corporation all contracts and other instruments under seal.
3. The Vice President: The Vice President shall be nominated by CofC with input from CLARG. The Vice-President shall be appointed by the Annual National Gathering and serve a one year term and can be reappointed for two successive terms. The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in case of the absence of the President or upon the President's request, including the authority to sign on behalf of the Corporation, all contracts and other instruments under seal.
4. The Secretary: The Secretary shall be nominated by the Communications Committee and shall normally then serve as a member of the Communications Committee. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Annual National Gathering and serve a one year term and can be reappointed for successive terms. The Secretary shall keep records of the meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Annual National Gathering. The Secretary shall have custody of the Seal of the Corporation and shall have charge of all records and papers of the Corporation.
5. The Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Finance Committee and shall be a member of the Finance Committee and shall be appointed by the Annual National Gathering and serve one one-year term and can be reappointed for three successive terms. The Treasurer shall have custody of the corporate funds and securities and keep accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Corporation, and shall deposit all monies and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such depositories and with such right of withdrawal and access as may be designated by the Finance Committee. The funds of the Corporation shall be disbursed as ordered by the Finance Committee and the Treasurer shall make proper vouchers for such disbursements and shall render to the Finance Committee, whenever it may require it, an account of all her or his transactions and of the financial condition of the Corporation. The Finance Committee shall from time to time determine who shall be authorized on the Corporation's behalf to sign checks, drafts or other financial instruments.

The Finance Committee may provide that the Treasurer can authorize execution on behalf of the Corporation resolutions which a bank may require as pre-requisite to opening, maintaining or changing an account without requiring the Finance Committee to pass such a resolution in the exact form required by the bank. This provision constitutes approval by the Finance Committee of such resolutions in whatever form the bank may require that the Corporation's Treasurer approve.

ARTICLE VI Standing Committees

1. Committee of Committees:

The Committee of Committees is the board of trustees and shall be composed of the clerks of all the committees and the officers of the corporation. The CofC shall nominate, with input from CLARG, to the Annual National Gathering a person to be appointed as President and a person to be appointed as Vice President of AVP/USA. The Committee of Committees has the responsibility to share information and to coordinate the committees in regards to the budget and other matters. Decision making remains at the committee level. But, in the event of disagreement among committees, the Committee of Committees shall facilitate a resolution. This responsibility shall include all amendments to the budget

2. Committee of Local and Regional Groups:

The Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLARG) is comprised of representatives appointed from each Regional Group. The clerk or co-clerks will sit on the Committee of Committees. CLARG shall provide input to the CofC for nominations of President and Vice President to be presented to the Annual National Gathering. CLARG assists locals and regions, helps resolve territory disputes and serious violations of policy or standards, supports existing and emerging local groups, and makes policy recommendations to the Annual National Gathering.

3. Conference Committee:

The Conference Committee has the responsibility for planning and facilitating the Annual National Gathering, including budget, site selection, agenda, program and all preparations and publicity.

4. Education Committee:

The Education Committee has the function of developing AVP/USA manuals and other instructional materials and training as needed.

5. Finance and Fundraising Committee:

The Finance and Fundraising Committee is responsible for overseeing all financial matters of the Corporation, including fundraising. It shall prepare a proposed annual budget for the Annual National Gathering, with input from committees and

in consultation with the Committee of Committees. It shall prepare an annual financial report to include at least an income and expense report and a balance sheet for the fiscal year that will be presented to the Annual Gathering. It shall nominate to the Annual National Gathering a person to be appointed as Treasurer of AVP/USA.

6. Communications Committee:

The Communications Committee shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining the communications system of AVP/USA, including disseminating and responding to electronic, written and verbal communications. It shall nominate to the Annual National Gathering a person to be appointed as Secretary of AVP/USA. It is also responsible for developing [except manuals], publishing, marketing and distributing AVP/USA materials and visual aids.

The Annual National Gathering may establish or dissolve committees when there is an interest from the membership to do so. Such an action shall be noted in the minutes of the Gathering where it occurred.

All committees are responsible for recruiting their own members, appointing their own clerks and recording clerk and for determining their budgetary needs and method of functioning. Committees shall provide annual reports to the National Gathering and post these reports to the website within sixty (60) days of the Annual Gathering.

ARTICLE VII Decision Making

Decisions of AVP/USA shall be made by the consensus process that incorporates ideas from the entire group.

ARTICLE VIII

Fiscal Year

The Fiscal Year of the Corporation shall be twelve months and shall run from April 1 through March 31.

ARTICLE IX Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by the decision-making process described in Article VII, provided notice of the proposed amendment has been mailed to all representatives of local groups, regional organizations, and committees at least 30 days in advance of the date set for action on the amendment. In order that as much of the community as possible is represented at least indirectly at the national gathering, it is the responsibility of local groups to inform all of their members both inside of prison and in the community of any proposed changes to the by-laws.